

On a Salamander (Sieboldia) from Shanghai.

By Dr. J. E. GRAY, F.R.S. &c.

Mr. Swinhoe has sent to the British Museum a skin, including the bones of the head and feet, of an animal of this genus from Shanghai. It is about 27 inches long. I do not see any character by which it differs from the *Sieboldia* from Japan, and am inclined to regard it as a specimen of that species. I have compared the head with the skull on the skeleton of the latter animal, but do not find any difference, except that the Japanese specimen in the Museum is older than the one which Mr. Swinhoe has sent from Shanghai.

M. Blanchard, in the 'Comptes Rendus,' 1871, lxxiii. p. 79, describes a new species of this genus under the name of *Sieboldia Davidiana*, from Western China, which is noticed in the Ann. & Mag. Nat. Hist. 1871, viii. p. 212. M. Blanchard, though he gives it a name, gives no distinctive characters between it and the Japanese species.

The Ribbon Seal of Alaska. By T. GILL.

This species of seal (*Phoca fasciata*, Shaw, or *P. equestris*, Pallas) is found in the waters of Northern Alaska, and is, so far as known, only represented well in the museum of St. Petersburg. In the Smithsonian collection there are two skins, obtained by Dr. Dall from Cape Romanzoff, but no skull or other parts of the skeleton. The species is remarkable for colour as well as for structural peculiarities. The male is at once recognizable by the colour: this may be said to be a chocolate-brown, except (1) a band of whitish yellow bent forwards towards the crown around the neck, (2) an oval ring of the same colour on each side, encircling the fore feet, and passing in front just before them, and (3) another band, also bent forwards above, behind the middle of the trunk. There is considerable variation in the extent of these bands; and sometimes the peribrachial rings are more or less confluent with the posterior band. The females are simply whitish yellow, or have very indistinct traces of the postmedian band (*vide* Von Schrenck).

The structural (and especially dental) characters of this species, according to Von Schrenck, indicate a generic distinction from all the familiar forms of the subfamily *Phocine*. The molars (except the first) are two-rooted, as in the typical *Phocine*—but in external form are simply conic or have rudimentary cusps, thus resembling *Halichoerus*. The genus may be named *Histriophoca*.

The special object of this communication is to call the attention of travellers in Alaska to the species; and skeletons (especially skulls) and skins are earnestly asked for. The species has been found also in Kamtschatka, and at the mouth of the Kamtschatka river in March and April, arriving there later than the other seals named.

One of the skins in the Smithsonian collection has been peeled off from the animal almost entire, and by a cross slit below and between the fore feet, and, being tied in front, has evidently been used as a bag.—*American Naturalist*, vol. vii., March 1873.